

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 11685

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PEPR,SLM, CB, CH
SUBJECT: VIETNAMESE MOVE AGAINST "WEAK ELEMENTS" IN THE PARTY

1. SUMMARY: A SPLIT IN VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST PARTY RANKS
OVER FOREIGN POLICY REPORTEDLY OCCURRED DURING A MEETING OF
THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE LAST MONTH. RECENT VIETNAMESE PRESS
EDITORIALS, NOTING "WEAK ELEMENTS" IN THE PARTY AND INDICA-
TING A NEED TO ERADICATE SUCH PEOPLE, CONFIRM THE SPLIT
AND SUGGEST THAT A PURGE OF THE VCP IS IN PROGRESS.
END SUMMARY

2. AN EXPERIENCE LOCAL JOURNALIST, WHO RECENTLY RETURNED
FROM INDOCHINA, HEARD REPORTS THAT THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST
PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE MET LAST MONTH TO DISCUSS CURRENT
PROBLEMS WITH CHINA AND CAMBODIA. THE MEETING REPORTEDLY
ENDED WITH A SPLIT IN THE RANKS. SOME PERSONS CALLED
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FOR A MORE FLEXIBLE AND ACCOMMODATING POLICY WITH
VIETNAM'S TWO HOSTILE NEIGHBORS WHILE OTHERS ARGUED
TO STAND FAST AGAINST CHINA AND FINISH OFF THE POL POT
REGIME. THE HARDLINES REPORTEDLY WON OUT.

3. A RECENT SERIES OF EDITORIALS IN VIETNAM'S PARTY
DAILY, NHAN DAN, SUPPORT THE REPORT OF A SPLIT, AND ALSO

SUGGEST THAT A PURGE IS IN PROGRESS. THE FIRST EDITORIAL, APPEARING AUGUST 1, ENTITLED, "THE SOURCE OF OUR STRENGTH", DECLARED THAT "OUR PARTY.....HAS RESOLUTELY PREVENTED AND OVERCOME OPPORTUNIST TENDENCIES FOSTERED BY NON-PROLETARIAN MOVEMENTS INSIDE THE COUNTRY AND BY FOREIGN OPPORTUNIST MOVEMENTS AND HAS FIRMLY RID ITSELF OF DEGENERATE ELEMENTS TO MAINTAIN THE STRENGTH AND PURITY OF ITS RANKS."

4. ON AUGUST 2, THERE APPEARED AN EVEN MORE OMINOUS EDITORIAL ENTITLED, "MATURE IN STRUGGLES AND ORDEALS." THIS ARTICLE NOTED THAT "IN EACH STRUGGLE THERE HAVE EXISTED NUMEROUS SHINING HEROIC EXAMPLES ALONGSIDE "WEAK ELEMENTS" WHO EARNED THEIR PROFITS THROUGH SPECULATIVE ACTS AND WHO DID NOT SERVE THE REVOLUTION WITH ALL THEIR HEARTS. IN EACH TEST OF STRENGTH, THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO EXPOSED THEMSELVES AS TRAITORS AND PEOPLE WHO SURRENDER. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE SELLING THEMSELVES PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY TO THE ENEMY WAS NOT SMALL. THE PARTY CAN ONLY INCREASE ITS STRENGTH BY ERADICATING SUCH BAD ELEMENTS." IN AN APPARENT ALLUSION TO SOME MEMBERS WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY THE CHINESE, THE ARTICLE GOES ON TO STATE "WE HAVE GAINED A LOT OF EXPERIENCE FROM VARIOUS PARTIES AND COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD. THE TENDENCIES TO FAVOR OPPORTUNISM AS ADVOCATED BY ONE ELEMENT OR ANOTHER IN

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THE INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT HAVE ALSO AFFECTED THE "WEAK ELEMENTS" IN OUR RANKS. BUT THE GLOWING REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE OF OUR PEOPLE AND THE FINE REVOLUTIONARY QUALITIES OF OUR PARTY HAVE OVERCOME AND REDUCED SUCH UNHEALTHY EFFECTS."

5. AN AUGUST 5 EDITORIAL HAMMERED ON THE SAME THEME, PROCLAIMING THAT "ON THE PATH OF THE ARDUOUS STRUGGLE, (THE PARTY) OFTEN HAS TO LEAVE BEHIND OR DISCARD WEAK ELEMENTS INCAPABLE OF ENDURING TRIALS OR BENT ON FIVING UP OR BETRAYING THE CAUSE WHICH THEY MAY HAVE JOINED FOR UNHEALTHY MOTIVES."

6. AN EDITORIAL OF AUGUST 6 SEEMS TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THE PARTY DIFFERENCES WERE NOT LIMITED TO EXTERNAL PROBLEMS BUT WERE OF A MORE FUNDAMENTAL NATURE INCLUDING THE WHOLE QUESTION OF BRINGING ABOUT SOCIALISM IN VIETNAM. THE EDITORIAL NOTES THAT "SOME, BURDENED BY THEIR PAST, HAVE HOWEVER, FAILED TO KEEP PACE WITH THE EVOLUTION OF HISTORY." THE ARTICLE POINTS OUT "A COMMUNIST SOCIETY IS POSSIBLE ONLY WHEN THERE IS A HIGHLY DEVELOPED PRODUCTIVE FORCE AND A NEW LIFESTYLE AND NEW SOCIAL

CONCEPT ARE ESTABLISHED. ALL UTOPIAN SOCIALIST TENDENCIES
ARE UNSCIENTIFIC AND REACTIONARY."

7. COMMENT: THE ABOVE OUT-POURING FROM NHAN DAN LEAVES
NO DOUBT THAT "WEAK ELEMENTS" IN THE VIETNAMESE SYSTEM
ARE IN THE PROCESS OF BEING OUSTED. WHILE PART OF THE
STRUGGLE SEEMS TO CONCERN HOW FAR VIETNAM SHOULD GO IN
DEFYING CHINA AND PRESSING THE WAR IN CAMBODIA, OTHER
COMMENTARIESSEEM TO INDICATE DISAGREEMENT OVER THE
NATURE OF "SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION IN VIETNAM," MOST
PARTICULARLY IN THE AREA OF AGRICULTURE COLLECTIVIZATION
IN THE SOUTH. THE TONE OF THE NHAN DAN EDITORIALS
SUGGESTS THAT THOSE WHO MIGHT ADVOCATE A SOFTER AND MORE
CAUTIOUS LINE IN REORGANIZING THE ECONOMY AND RESOLVING
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VIETNAM'S DIFFERENCES WITH HER NEIGHBORS ARE WEAK AND
SHOULD BE REMOVED, AND THAT CURRENT SRV POLICIES BOTH
AT HOME AND ABROAD WILL BE PURSUED FULL TILT. WE
WILL BE WATCHING CAREFULLY TO SEE WHICH VIETNAMESE PER-
SONALITIES ARE AMONG THE MISSING IN THE WEEKS TO COME.
SHOESMITH

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